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ABSTRACT

Current literature indicates a growing interest in the development of individualized, self-paced, learning systems within community college courses in order to accommodate the differing learning abilities of non-traditional students. To assess student preferences for such instruction as opposed to traditional, lecture/discussion teaching, an individualized instructional component concerned with the writing of an expository, classification theme was introduced mid-term to the 84 students enrolled in English 101 during the 1977 Spring semester at Harrisburg Area Community College. Students worked through the component at their own pace, completing self-quizzes and a post-test when they felt they had completed the necessary objectives. A questionnaire with eight forced-choice items was used to survey students' attitudes. Only 19% completed the component before the deadline date, and although the survey showed that 69% preferred to do work on their own, fewer than half indicated a willingness to be responsible for their own learning process and for meeting course objectives. The survey also indicated, among other findings, that sex and age were insignificant in determining student preferences. The report textually and graphically outlines the responses to each item and is appended by a description of the component and a copy of the questionnaire. (Author/JP)

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A SURVEY OF STUDENTS' ATTITIDES TOWARD AN INDIVIDUALIZED INSTRUCTIONAL COMPONENT IN EXPOSITORY WRITING

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

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Literature concerned with the need for change in instructional delivery systems in community colleges emphasizes rational frameworks that accommodate many different instructional modes for the broad range of needs of non-traditional college level students. To carry out this descriptive study, an individualized instructional component concerned with the writing of a classification theme was introduced to students enrolled in four sections of English Composition 101, a three-hour college level course. The component included the rationale for writing the classification theme, cognitive objectives (enabling objectives and a terminal objective), text assignments, self quizzes, and a post test. To assess student preferences of the traditional lecture/discussion teaching method as opposed to the individualized instructional component, a student survey instrument with forced-choice items was utilized. In addition to other findings, the survey indicated that the majority of students preferred the instructional component; however, fewer than half of the respondents were willing to be responsible for their own learning and progress and for meeting stated objectives. Instructional components as described should be built into a total course and introduced at the beginning of the course, giving students the option of selecting the mode of teaching which would best suit their learning styles. The instructor should have prior knowledge of the entry skills of the students; thus the enabling objectives of the components could be modified or changed accordingly. Further, the students' backgrounds, interests, motives, perspectives, aspirations, and limitations all play an important part in the success or failure of any teaching strategy.

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A SURVEY OF STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARD AN INDIVIDUALIZED INSTRUCTIONAL COMPONENT IN EXPOSITORY WRITING

Introduction

The impetus for the development of this paper came from statements made during a lecture by John E. Roueche, National Lecturer in Curriculum Development for Nova University. Dr. Roueche emphasized that not every student is motivated by nor can successfully complete individualized instructional units. Some students need the day-by-day guidance provided by the instructor.

During the 1977 Spring Semester at Harrisburg Area Community College, the writer had used the traditional method of lectures, class discussions, examples of expository essays, and plan sheets to teach the rhetorical approach to expository writing in English Composition 101--a transfer credit course for freshmen. Students had written example themes, comparison/contrast themes, and causal analysis themes through the process of the traditional teaching approach; thus all students were expected to complete all assignments by a stated date. How would the same students react to a different teaching strategy in the middle of the semester? To gain some insight into students' preferences of teaching strategies, an individualized instructional component was developed to be used as a teaching tool for the writing of a classification theme.

Background and Significance

The multiplicity of publications presently available to educators attest to the increasing interest they are developing

in individualized instruction within a group context. The practice of expecting every student to pursue learning at the same pace, within the same time span, and with the same instructional materials and activities appears to be an unrealistic expectation in classroom situations, especially in a community college. Moore explains that self-instructional modules, packages, components, and programs are "a unique innovation because [they provide] for analysis of entering and terminal behaviors, build content into a presentation along the lines of definite teaching strategies, and, most importantly, allow for self-pacing." [11:15] Moore further cites the advantages of this mode of teaching. Teachers are given time to work with individual students, diagnosing, inspiring, motivating, and assisting them on a one-to-one or small group basis; more time is available to teachers to provide remedial work or use supplementary materials; alternate learning experiences can be provided by the teacher; and by using self-instructional material the teacher can create more flexible school schedules. [11:15-16] Thorwald Esbensen points out that differentiated pacing is probably the most widespread form of individualization. "In other words, the goals of instruction are the same and the materials are the same, but the students move along their common track at differing rates of speed depending on their various abilities." [4:270] Gagné and Paradise, in dealing with sources of individual differences in rate of learning from a learning program, suggest that differences in rate of learning observed among learners are

due not to variations on some underlying general ability to learn fast, but rather to the number of competencies and the kinds of knowledge the learner brings to the situation. The authors state that among the reasons for failure to learn to perform a task after taking a learning program are (1) subordinate knowledge not being included in the learning program, (2) insufficient practice resulting in a poor recall of the material, or (3) a defective program which does not guide the required thinking in order to induce the necessary integration of competencies. [5:12]

According to Cohen, since all learners do not learn in the same way and even if they are expected to demonstrate certain abilities, all should not be required to go through the same instructional sequence. He states further:

> If the course is designed to lead to productions that evince particular skills, students can be released from patterned sequences at any time that they submit the required composition or product. Let's suggest a variable calendar with students entering and leaving instructional sequences or courses at different times. Some students need the step-by-step instruction leading to the complex skill; others may grasp the requisite knowledge all at once. The instructor's task is to insure that the students learn. Within the limits of feasibility, he should select as many media forms and task sequences as required for this learning to occur. [2:79]

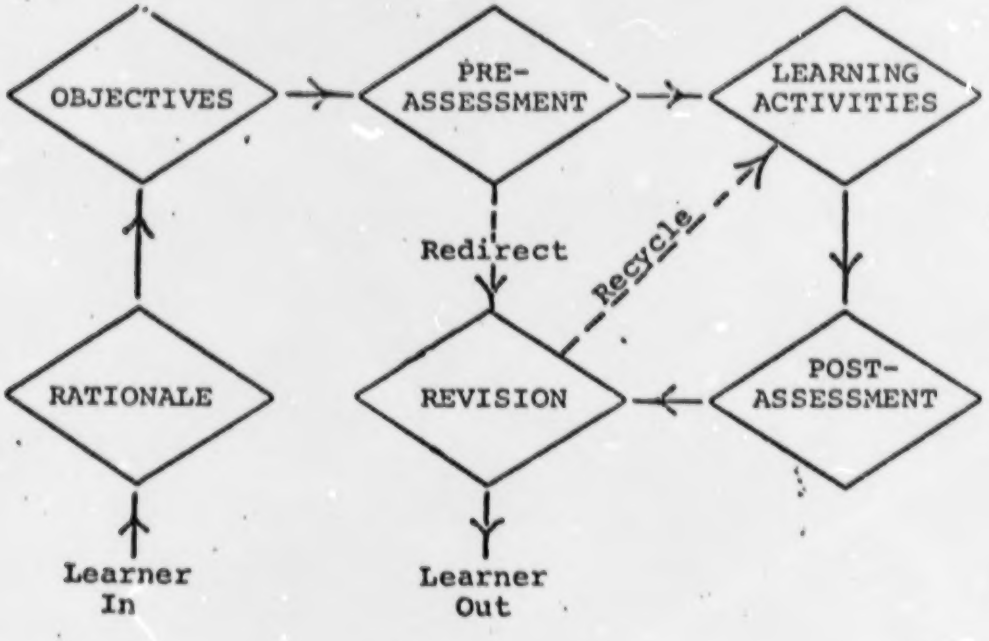
Philip G. Kapfer is concerned with establishing a climate "that protects the student's right to progress at his individually most productive pace. . . . At the same time he should use and develop his own learning style, however 'far out' by conventional standards." [10:33] Kapfer continues that the learner must be

cognizant of what he is to do and how he is to do it as well as the expected terminal behavior if individual learning is to occur. In "Defining Instructional Objectives" Cohen discusses the defining of objectives as a "deliberate attempt to focus instructors' and administrators' attention in their actual intent--and for timely reasons. Formerly, when instruction was all lecture-textbook, learn or don't, it was so ill-defined that it was immune to assessment." [1:62] Cohen continues that it is possible to teach the types of students that fill our institutions. He suggests arranging instructional forms according to the nature of the tasks assigned to the student, and thus change will be effected.

Herrscher's booklet Implementing Individualized Instruction contains pertinent statements concerning the need for change in the traditional methods of instruction at the college level. Herrscher, along with the many other proponents of a systematic approach to individualized instruction, is concerned with the learning problems of non-traditional college-level students: the low achiever, the minority student, the culturally disadvantaged, the handicapped, the socioeconomically deprived, the unmotivated student. Herrscher points out that the systematic approach to individualized instruction "is not a teaching method but a rational framework that accomodates many different instructional modes." [8:1] Herrscher presents an instructional system which is a synthesis of ideas from the writings of Ralph Tyler, W. James Popham, Bela Banathy, and Jerrold Kemp. The following system, according to Herrscher, is at the operational level which serves as a map for the learner to master a unit of

instruction. According to Herrscher, the six basic steps of the instructional system "are combined in an empirical manner to produce a viable and efficient learning system. The system's proven capability of producing measurable learner achievement is its hallmark." [8:4]

An Instructional System



Hammons predicts that "by 1987 most colleges will be making at least a token committment to the systems approach to instruction." He continues that many community college faculty have tried "piecemeal experimentation with the individual components of a systems approach" for the past decade; however, total programs which use a systematic approach are fewer in number. [6:76] Hammons further cites K. Patricia Cross's study of a random sample of community colleges increasing interest in individually

focused rather than group-based instruction. The study states: "self-pacing experienced the greatest growth; its use jumped from 31 percent of the colleges in 1970 to 68 percent in 1974." [6:76] In a needs assessment of colleges in the Middle States and Northeast Accrediting Regions, Hammons and Wallace found that "one-half of those polled responded that they had some need for staff education in developing and using individualized instructional materials and 17 percent more said their need was critical." [7]

One of the recommendations of the 1972 AACJC Assembly Report was to "utilize new concepts through a learning center, personalizing, if not individualizing, the instructional process. Learning modules, in varying forms (as to time and content) and other new techniques and technologies, will help to accommodate the broad range of needs among students to be served . . . . Curricula should be redesigned in terms of learning modules which would subsequently multiply students' options." [12:135,145]

Procedures

In order to carry out this descriptive study, an individualized instructional component was introduced to four sections of English Composition 101 (84 students) during the 1977 Spring Semester at Harrisburg Area Community College. The rhetorical approach to writing was used in the four sections. The individualized instructional component was designed for writing a classification theme since the students had previously completed example themes, comparison/contrast themes, and causal analysis themes using the traditional lecture/discussion method

of instruction.

The individualized instructional component included the rationale for writing the classification theme, cognitive objectives (enabling objectives and a terminal objective), text assignments, self quizzes, and a post test. The first version of the instructional component is included as Appendix I. Students worked through the component at their own pace, completing the self-quizzes and taking the posttest when they felt they had completed the necessary objectives. Students met during the regular class periods, each working on the section of the component which was necessary before proceeding to the next section. The instructor assisted students needing directions to complete a section of the component. Since students were already familiar with the terminology of the plan sheet used to develop themes written during the first part of the semester, they were able to proceed to the terminal objective (the writing of a classification theme) with individual assistance in selecting appropriate topics for the theme. Classroom discussions occurred during the class periods when problems arose which affected the majority of the students. Out-of-class appointments were encouraged for students encountering problems which could not be dealt with during regular class sessions. Students proceeded to the next assignment after successfully completing the terminal objective of the instructional component.

To assess the attitudes of students toward the individualized instructional component, a modified version of a questionnaire used by Connolly and Sepe [3:27-28] was administered to all

students who completed the component. The questionnaire is included as Appendix II.

A descriptive report was made of the data obtained from the questionnaire. The data were tabulated by hand, and tables were constructed to report the results of students' preferences of instructional methodology according to (1) total group responses, (2) sex of the respondents, and (3) age group of the respondents.

Results

As indicated elsewhere, the data collected were analyzed for the purpose of ascertaining the preferences of students relative to an individualized component as the teaching tool for writing a classification theme as opposed to the traditional lecture/discussion method previously used in the semester.

Table 1, pages 10 and 11, contains the preferences of students as a group. In response to Item 1--student working primarily on his own using individualized materials and working occasionally in small groups versus student working in a regular class setting of 25-30 students--sixty-nine percent of the respondents preferred the individualized component as opposed to thirty-one respondents who preferred the traditional approach. Conversely, in responding to Item 2, sixty-nine percent preferred proceeding at a pace as determined by their ability to master specific tasks; thirty-one percent chose the group approach. Although outside work, primarily in the form of reading, was required in both choices contained in Item 3, sixty-eight percent preferred that a major portion of the required course work be done on campus using individualized materials completed within a varied time

frame as opposed to thirty-two percent who preferred to meet in a regular class setting for three hours per week.

Items 4 and 5 dealt with assessing student progress. Eighty percent of the respondents preferred exams administered at the end of each unit whenever the required material was mastered; twenty percent chose the traditional announced tests and examinations. Seventy-six percent of the respondents preferred having grades based upon the achievement of stated objectives; twenty-four percent chose the method of assigning grades based on the performance of their classmates.

In choosing whether the student would be responsible for his own learning and progress in meeting the stated objectives or whether the student would meet certain requirements set by the instructor to maintain satisfactory progress, fifty-seven percent of the respondents chose the latter concept and forty-three percent chose the former. Seventy-one percent of the respondents preferred that the instructor serve as a resource to the student as opposed to twenty-nine percent who preferred the role of the instructor as the primary source of information by lecturing and answering questions in a class situation.

In reference to deciding the time required to complete course work, seventy-six respondents preferred a course which would be completed whenever the student completed the course objectives within the sixteen weeks; twenty percent preferred a course which would encompass the normal sixteen-week time span. See Table 1, pages 10-12.

Table 1

Preferences of All Respondents
Responses to Each Item: N=84, %=100

Item	N	%
1. I would prefer a course in which:		
a. the student will work primarily on his own using individualized materials. He will occasionally work with small groups and/or with the instructor on a one-to-one basis.	58	69
OR		
b. the student will work primarily in a group of 25-30 listening and responding to the instructor's lecture with class discussion as a supplement.	26	31
2. I would prefer a course in which:		
a. the pace of the course will be adjusted to the group. The instructor will make weekly assignments to the class as a whole. Students will be expected to complete assignments on date due.	26	31
OR		
b. the student will proceed at his own pace as determined by his ability to master specific tasks. This pace will vary from student to student.	58	69
3. I would prefer a course in which:		
a. a major portion of the required course work will be done on campus using individualized materials. The time required to complete the material will vary. Outside work, primarily in the form of reading, may be expected.	57	68
OR		
b. the student will meet with the class for three hours per week. Additional work, primarily in the form of reading, may be expected outside of class.	27	32

4. I would prefer a course in which:		
a. three tests, a final exam, and course papers will be utilized to assess the student's progress in the course.	17	20
OR		
b. exams will be given at the end of each unit. A student may take the exam when he feels sufficiently prepared. When a student passes a unit exam at a pre-determined acceptable level, he will proceed to the next unit. A final examination will be required. Papers written for the units will be part of final grade.	67	80
5. I would prefer a course in which:		
a. grades will be based upon the student achieving specified course objectives. Grades A and B will be assigned when the student demonstrates mastery of the knowledge and skills required by the stated course objectives.	64	76
OR		
b. grades will be assigned as based on the student's performance of his classmates. Grades of either A, B, C, D, or F will be utilized.	20	24
6. I would prefer a course in which:		
a. the student will be responsible for his own learning and progress and for meeting the stated course objectives.	36	43
OR		
b. the student will have to meet certain requirements set by the instructor to maintain staisfactory progress in the course.	48	57
7. I would prefer a course in which:		
a. the instructor will be the primary source of information for the students by lecturing and answering questions in a traditional class setting.	24	29
OR		

b. the instructor will serve as a resource to the students, assisting them when they run into difficulty and suggesting materials and approaches to aid them in meeting course objectives.	60	71
8. I would prefer a course which:		
a. would end in sixteen weeks.	20	24
OR		
b. was completed when a student reached the course objectives within the sixteen weeks.	64	76

The preferences of respondents according to their sex are contained in Table 2, pages 15-17. Of the total number of respondents (84), forty-four were males and forty were females. Sixty-one percent males and seventy-eight percent females preferred the student working primarily on his own, using individualized materials and working occasionally in small groups; thirty-nine percent males and twenty-two percent females chose working primarily in a group of 25-30 students. Sixty-one percent males and seventy-eight percent females preferred the student proceeding at his own pace as determined by his ability to master specific tasks, while thirty-nine percent males and twenty-two percent females chose the pace of the mode of instruction which would be adjusted to the group. In response to Item 3--a major portion of the required course work done on campus using individualized materials completed within a varied time frame as opposed to work in a regular class setting for three times per week--seventy percent males and sixty-five percent females preferred the first option; thirty percent males and thirty-five percent females preferred the second option.

In making preferences of the mode used to evaluate student progress, seventy-five percent males and eighty-five percent females indicated that exams should be given at the end of each unit when the student feels sufficiently prepared in addition to a final exam; in contrast, twenty-five percent males and fifteen percent females preferred the traditional method of scheduling tests as well as a final exam. Seventy-eight percent males and eighty percent females preferred that grades be based upon the

student achieving specified objectives; twenty-seven percent males and twenty percent females preferred that grades be assigned as based on the student's performance in relation to that of his classmates.

Items 6 and 7 dealt with assignment of grades. Fifty-seven percent males and fifty-eight percent females preferred that the student meet certain requirements set by the instructor to maintain satisfactory progress in the course; forty-three percent males and forty-two percent females preferred that the student be held responsible for his own learning and progress and for meeting the stated objectives. Sixty-four percent males and eighty percent females preferred that the instructor serve as a resource to the student, while thirty-six percent males and twenty percent females preferred that the instructor serve as the primary source of information for the student in a class situation. In choosing the time span for the course, sixty-six percent males and eighty-eight percent females preferred a course that is completed when a student reached the objectives within the sixteen-week framework; thirty-four percent males and twelve percent females preferred a course which would encompass the normal sixteen-week time span. See Table 2 on the following pages.

Table 2

Preferences of Respondents According to Sex
N = 44 Males, 40 Females

Item	Males N	Males %	Females N	Females %
1. I would prefer a course in which:				
a. the student will work primarily on his own using individualized materials. He will occasionally work with small groups and/or with the course instructor on a one-to-one basis.	27	61	31	78
OR				
b. the student will work primarily in a group of 25-30 persons, listening and responding to the instructor's lectures with class discussion as a supplement.	17	39	9	22
2. I would prefer a course in which:				
a. the pace of the course will be adjusted to the group. The instructor will make weekly assignments to the class as a whole. Students will be expected to complete these assignments on time.	17	39	9	22
OR				
b. the student will proceed at his own pace as determined by his ability to master specific tasks. This pace will vary from student to student.	27	61	31	78
3. I would prefer a course in which:				
a. a major portion of the required course work will be done on campus using individualized materials. The time required to complete the material will vary. Outside work, primarily in the form of reading, may be expected.	31	70	26	65
OR				
b. the student will meet with the class for three hours per week. Additional work, primarily in the form of reading, may be expected outside of class.	13	30	14	35

4. I would prefer a course in which:				
a. three tests, a final exam, and course papers will be utilized to assess the student's progress in the course.	11	25	6	15
OR				
b. exams will be given at the end of each unit. A student may take the exam when he feels sufficiently prepared. When a student passes a unit exam at a pre-determined acceptable level, he will proceed to the next unit. A final examination will be required. Papers written for the units will be part of final grade.	33	75	34	85
5. I would prefer a course in which:				
a. grades will be based upon the student achieving specified course objectives. Grades A and B will be assigned when the student demonstrates mastery of the knowledge and skills required by the stated course objectives.	32	73	32	80
OR				
b. grades will be assigned as based on the student's performance of his classmates. Grades of either A, B, C, D, or F will be utilized.	12	27	8	20
6. I would prefer a course in which:				
a. the student will be responsible for his own learning and progress and for meeting the stated course objectives.	19	43	17	42
OR				
b. the student will have to meet certain requirements set by the instructor to maintain satisfactory progress in the course.	25	57	23	58
7. I would prefer a course in which:				
a. the instructor will be the primary source of information for the students by lecturing and answering questions in a class situation.	16	36	8	20
OR				

b. the instructor will serve as a resource to the students, assisting them when they run into difficulty and suggesting materials and approaches to aid them in meeting course objectives.	28	64	32	80
8. I would prefer a course which:				
a. would end in sixteen weeks. OR	15	34	5	12
b. was completed when a student reached the course objectives within the sixteen weeks.	29	66	35	88

Table 3 was constructed to report the results of the questionnaire according to four age groups of the respondents. In reporting the results in this section, responses were combined into two age groups: the largest age group (18-25) encompassed seventy-five students; the 26-40 age group, nine students. No respondents were over forty years of age. Table 3 includes the complete breakdown of responses according to age groups. Sixty-nine percent of the 18-25 age group and sixty-one percent of the 26-40 age group preferred a course in which the student would work primarily on his own, using individualized components; thirty-one percent of the 18-25 age group and thirty-three percent of the 26-40 age group preferred a course in which the student would work in a traditional group context. Sixty-eight percent of the 18-25 age group and seventy-eight percent of the 26-40 age group preferred a class in which the student would proceed at his own pace as determined by his ability to master specific tasks; thirty-two percent of the 18-25 age group and twenty-two percent of the 26-40 age group preferred a course in which the pace of the course would be adjusted to the group. Item 3 listed a choice between a course in which a major portion of the required course work using individualized materials with a varying time to complete the material or a course in which the student would meet regularly with the class for three hours per week. Sixty-nine percent of the 18-25 age group and fifty-seven percent of the 26-40 age group chose the first option; thirty-one percent of the 18-25 age group and forty-four percent of the 26-40 age group preferred the second option of Item 3.

Items 4 and 5 dealt with eliciting responses concerning grading procedures. Seventy-nine percent of the 18-25 age group and eighty-eight percent of the 26-40 age group preferred that tests be administered at the end of each unit, while twenty-one percent of the 18-25 age group and twelve percent of the 26-40 age group preferred that regular tests be scheduled throughout the course. Seventy-seven percent of the 18-25 age group and sixty-seven percent of the 26-40 age group preferred that grades be based upon the student achieving specified course objectives as opposed to twenty-three percent of the 18-25 age group and thirty-three percent of the 26-40 age group who preferred that grades be assigned as based on the student's performance in relation to that of his classmates.

In choosing the option of the student being responsible for his own learning and progress and for meeting the stated course objectives as opposed to the student meeting certain requirements set by the instructor to maintain satisfactory progress, the following preferences were made: fifty-seven percent of the 18-25 age group and fifty-six percent of the 26-40 age group preferred the second option, while forty-three percent of the 18-25 age group and forty-four percent of the 26-40 age group preferred the first option. Seventy-two percent of the 18-25 age group and sixty-seven percent of the 26-40 age group preferred that the instructor serve as a resource to the student in meeting course objectives; twenty-eight percent of the 18-25 age group and thirty-three percent of the 26-40 age group preferred that the instructor serve as the primary source of information for the student by lecturing and

answering questions in a class situation.

Item 8 listed a choice of having a course end in the traditional sixteen weeks as opposed to having the course end when the student completed the stated course obkectives within the sixteen weeks. Seventy-seven percent of the 18-25 age group and sixty-seven percent of the 26-40 age group prefered that the course end when the stated objectives were reached; twenty-three percent of the 18-25 age group and thirty-three percent of the 26-40 age group preferred a course which would end in the traditional sixteen weeks. See Table 3, pages 21-22.

Table 3

Preferences of Respondents According to Age Groups
N = (18-21, 62) (22-25, 13) (26-30, 4)(31-40,5)

	18-21		22-25		26-30		31-40	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1. I would prefer a course in which:								
a. the student will work primarily on his own using individualized materials. He will occasionally work with small groups and/or with the course instructor on a one-to-one basis.	45	73	7	54	2	50	4	80
OR								
b. the student will work primarily in a group of 25-30 persons, listening and responding to the instructor's lectures with class discussion as a supplement.	17	27	6	46	2	50	1	20
2. I would prefer a course in which:								
a. the pace of the course will be adjusted to the group. The instructor will make weekly assignments to the class as a whole. Students will be expected to complete these assignments on time.	17	27	7	54	1	25	1	20
OR								
b. the student will proceed at his own pace as determined by his ability to master specific tasks. This pace will vary from student to student.	45	73	6	46	3	75	4	80
3. I would prefer a course in which:								
a. a major portion of the required course work will be done on campus using individualized materials. The time required to complete the material will vary. Outside work, primarily in the form of reading, may be expected.	45	73	7	54	3	75	2	40
OR								
b. the student will meet with the class for three hours per week. Additional work, primarily in the form of reading, may be expected outside of class.	17	27	6	46	1	25	3	60
4. I would prefer a course in which:								
a. three tests, a final exam, and course papers will be utilized to assess the student's progress in the course.	11	18	5	38	0	0	1	20

OR								
b. exams will be given at the end of each unit. A student may take the exam when he feels sufficiently prepared. When a student passes a unit exam at a pre-determined acceptable level, he will proceed to the next unit. A final examination will be required. Papers written for the units will be part of final grade.	51	82	8	62	4	100	4	80
5. I would prefer a course in which:								
a. grades will be based upon the student achieving specified course objectives. Grades A and B will be assigned when the student demonstrates mastery of the knowledge and skills required by the stated course objectives.	50	81	8	62	2	50	4	80
OR								
b. grades will be assigned as based on the student's performance of his classmates. Grades of either A, B, C, D, or F will be utilized.	12	19	5	38	2	50	1	20
6. I would prefer a course in which:								
a. the student will be responsible for his own learning and progress and for meeting the stated course objectives.	27	44	5	38	1	25	3	60
OR								
b. the student will have to meet certain requirements set by the instructor to maintain satisfactory progress in the course.	35	56	8	62	3	75	2	40
7. I would prefer a course in which:								
a. the instructor will be the primary source of information for the students by lecturing and answering questions in a class situation.	18	29	3	23	1	25	2	40
OR								
b. the instructor will serve as a resource to the students, assisting them when they run into difficulty and suggesting materials and approaches to aid them in meeting course objectives.	44	71	10	77	3	75	3	60
8. I would prefer a course which:								
a. would end in sixteen weeks.	12	19	5	38	2	50	1	20
OR								
b. was completed when a student reached the course objectives within the sixteen weeks.	50	81	8	62	2	50	4	80

Discussion, Implications, and Recommendations

As stated earlier, the individualized instructional component was used in a group context, which, of course, is not to be confused with the provision of different materials for students in a group context.

Overall, most of the students reacted favorably to the introduction of a different teaching strategy. Approximately fifteen percent of the students, however, were skeptical of the procedure and questioned whether they would be "left on their own" completely. Even when it was explained that most of the work (except the required reading) would be done during regular class meetings and that the instructor would act as a facilitator in dealing with individual problems, they still were not completely convinced that they were not "being cheated" by not receiving the traditional lecture/discussion teaching strategy with which they were familiar. As the students progressed through the component, it became more evident that more than the initial fifteen percent were really not as motivated as they had perceived themselves to be. All of the students regularly attended the class sessions, even though some students did not ask for individual help. Most students required assistance in selecting an appropriate topic for the classification theme; thus class discussions appeared to be most helpful in that area of the component. The approximate working time allotted for the completion of the component was two weeks; however, after the first three class sessions it was clearly indicated that the allotted time had been miscalculated by the instructor. The

deadline was extended to the end of the third week.

Of the total of eighty-four students who worked through the component, sixteen students (19 percent) successfully completed the component before the deadline date, which is a smaller percentage than predicted by the instructor. Sixty-nine percent of the students indicated on the questionnaire that they preferred to work primarily on their own, yet only a small percent actually completed the component early and with very little assistance from the instructor. A further contradiction exists in student preferences in that a great majority of the students indicated that they preferred to work on their own, but fewer than half of the students preferred to be responsible for their own learning and progress and for meeting the stated course objectives. This point is reinforced by the study made by Connolly and Sepe which states that "the majority of students preferred all the characteristics of individualized instruction except having the responsibility for learning placed on them." [3:16]

The sex of the respondents did not indicate a significant difference in the preferences of the students in responding to most items of the questionnaire. In one of the areas (Item 8, concerning the completion of the course) twenty percent more females than males preferred that a course end when the stated objectives were reached. In two other areas (Items 1 and 2, student working primarily on his own and student proceeding through the course at his own pace as determined by his ability to master specific tasks) seventeen percent more females than males preferred these areas. Fifteen percent more males than

females preferred that a major portion of the required course work be done on campus using individualized materials (Item 3). In the other areas a difference of ten percent or less exists between the male/female preferences as indicated in Table 2.

The age of the respondents also did not indicate a significant difference in the preferences selected. Only one item (Item 3, which was concerned with a major portion of required course work being done on campus using individualized materials as opposed to the traditional two or three classes per week) showed that thirteen percent more of the 18-25 age group preferred the first choice. An eleven percent difference exists in the choices of Item 4 with more students in the 26-40 age group preferring exams at the end of each unit as opposed to tests administered throughout the course. All other items indicated less than ten percent difference in preferences of the age groups as shown in Table 3. Emmett L. Jones, et. al., cite "age, employment status, and financial responsibilities . . . make college an important but subordinate part of the lives of community college students. To expect them to initiate learning and pursue it aggressively is not realistic." [9:49]

As a result of using the instructional component and administering the student questionnaire, the instructor recognizes the limitations of the study. The "one-shot" attempt raises doubts concerning the effectiveness of the component as it was used in the middle of the semester after the students had become accustomed to a different teaching strategy. A total course should be built around the use of instructional components,

and students should have a choice of teaching strategies at the beginning of the course. More attention should be paid to the motivational aspect of teaching before individualized components are introduced to students. Further, the instructor should be more cognizant of the entry skills of the students; thus the enabling objectives of the components could be modified or changed accordingly. A variety of instructional materials and approaches should be available in order that students have a choice of materials and media which match their particular learning styles. Student attitudes, motivation, persistence plus effective instructional components for a total course should effectively advance the students' learning of the necessary material.

More is required of the instructor than having knowledge of good teaching strategies. The students' backgrounds, interests, motivations, perspectives, aspirations, limitations--all of these play an important part in the success or failure of any teaching strategy.

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APPENDIX I

EXPOSITORY WRITING COMPONENT

THE CLASSIFICATION THEME

Name _____

Date received _____

Date completed _____

Instructor: Charlyne H. Moten
College: Harrisburg Area Community College
Course Title: English Composition 101
Topic: Expository Writing Component: Classification Theme
Target Group: First Semester Freshmen

FIRST TEST VERSION

RATIONALE: As a structural pattern for explanatory writing, classification is a system of analyzing material, dividing the subject into categories, and classifying individual elements into these categories. Facts and opinions can become merely a hodge podge of ideas unless some system is used to effectively arrange facts and opinions in some meaningful manner. Although learning to put things, ideas, facts, opinions, etc., into some logical order will be of practical value to you, more importantly, the process of classifying promotes clear thinking and writing. The process requires logical thinking.

As stated in your text, you "classify" in all phases of your life--you use systematic thought. Classification is an "attempt to satisfy man's passion for the orderly arrangement of knowledge." The classifier often uses words like "kinds," "sorts," and "types." You frequently, consciously or unconsciously, classify your instructors, your classmates, your friends, your subjects--the list is almost endless. However, once a classification is established, each category is developed by an analysis of why or how each category differs from all other categories within the same kind, sort, or type.

COGNITIVE OBJECTIVES: After completing this component, you should be able to:

Distinguish classification from the previous writing techniques used in this class.

List the elementary principles of logic needed to classify ideas, facts, things, people, etc.

Select a topic which lends itself to classification.

Write a clearly developed thesis statement for the theme.

Develop appropriate categories for your topic.

Develop appropriate topic sentences which support the thesis.

List supporting facts, details, examples to support each topic sentence.

TERMINAL OBJECTIVE: Write an out-of-class classification theme on an approved topic of your choice which (1) contains approximately 500 words, (2) conforms to the elementary principles of logic listed in the text, and (3) conforms to

the plan sheet attached to this component.

MINIMUM PERFORMANCE STANDARD: No major grammatical errors (comma splices, fragments, fused sentences); no spelling errors; and not more than three minor errors in punctuation.

* *

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Text assignment: Writing With a Thesis: A Rhetoric and Reader, Chapter 6, "Division and Classification," pp. 129-158.

Cognitive Objectives	Instructions to Students
Objective 1 - Be able to distinguish classification from the previous writing techniques used in this class.	a. Read text, pp. 129-230 and attend class discussion. b. Take notes from sound/slide presentation: Communication Skills: Expository Writing, Part 3, The Center for the Humanities, Inc. c. Complete question 1 of Self Quiz 1.
Objective 2 - Be able to list the elementary principles of logic needed to classify ideas, facts, things, people, etc.	a. Read text, pp. 131-132. b. Complete questions 2 and 3 of Self Quiz 1.
Objective 3 - Be able to analyze the three essays in the text according to the principles of classification.	a. Answer the rest of the questions in Self Quiz 2.
Objective 4 - Be able to select a topic which lends itself to classification.	a. Read text, p. 133. b. In class discussion, justify categories for topics listed.
Objective 5 - Be able to write a correct thesis for your theme.	a. Use plan sheet attached to this component. b. Be prepared to defend your thesis during class discussion.
Objective 6 - Be able to develop appropriate categories for your topic.	a. Use plan sheet - Introduction.
Objective 7 - Be able to develop appropriate topic sentences which support your thesis.	a. Use "Body" portion of plan sheet.

Objective 8 - Be able to list supporting facts, details, examples to support each topic sentence.	a. Use "Body" portion of plan sheet.
Objective 9 - Be able to write an effective conclusion.	a. Use "Conclusion" portion of plan sheet. b. Bring complete plan sheet to class for discussion.
Objective 10 - Be able to write an effective out-of-class theme which meets the performance standard set in class.	a. Hand in completed theme by date due.

NOTES FROM CLASS DISCUSSIONS OR CONFERENCES WITH INSTRUCTOR:

SELF QUIZ 1

1. What is meant by the term "classification" as defined in your text? (p. 130)

2. In writing a classification theme, what four elementary principles of logic must you keep in mind? (pp. 131-132)

   a.

   b.

   c.

   d.

3. Why is a thesis necessary and what must the thesis for a classification theme include? (p. 132)

Check your answers with the text material included in the page numbers after each question. If you missed any, re-read the necessary pages.

SELF QUIZ 2

NOTE: The questions listed under the first essay apply to all essays.

ESSAY: "If I'm So Smart, How Come I Flunk All the Time?" (text, p. 137)

1. In your own words, state the thesis of the essay.
2. What principle of classification does the author use?
3. List the subject and the categories discussed by the author.
4. What method of development (explanation) is used for each of the categories contained in the essay?
5. What advice does the author give in his concluding statements?

ESSAY: "How to Lie With Statistics" (text, p. 142)

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

ESSAY: "What to Listen for in Music" (text, p. 152)

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

POST-TEST

1. How does "classification" differ from other techniques previously discussed in this class? (15 points)

2. Name four elementary principles of logic which apply to writing classification themes. (40 points)

3. A thesis for a classification theme must include what three elements? (15 points)

4. Write a 3-4 sentence summary of the following: (30 points)

   a. "If I'm So Smart, How Come I Flunk All the Time?"

   b. "How To Lie With Statistics"

   c. "What to Listen for in Music"

PLAN SHEET: CLASSIFICATION THEME

INTRODUCTION

Subject to be classified: _____

Principle of classification: _____

Subtopics (categories): _____

_____

_____

Thesis statement: _____

_____

BODY

Topic sentence - first subtopic: _____

_____

Points of development _____

_____

_____

Topic sentence - second subtopic: _____

_____

Points of development _____

_____

_____

Topic sentence - third subtopic: _____

_____

Points of Development _____

_____

_____

CONCLUSION: _____

_____

REVISION DATA

As listed on the first page of the component, this material is in its first test version. Your answers and comments to the following are being solicited and will be appreciated by your instructor and any future users of this material.

1. Please respond by placing "yes" or "no" in the blank.

_____ a. Were the objectives listed under "Learning Activities" clearly stated?

_____ b. Did you clearly understand the "Instructions to the Student"?

c. Did you understand the questions listed on

_____ Self Quiz No. 1?
_____ Self Quiz No. 2?
_____ Posttest?

_____ d. Did the completion of the Self Quizzes further your understanding of how to write the paper required in the terminal objective?

_____ e. Were you able to complete most of the component on your own?

_____ f. Were the class discussions helpful in your completion of the component?

_____ g. Were your conferences with your instructor helpful in clearing up any problems you had with the component?

2. What suggestions do you have for the improvement of this component? Check those about which you feel strongly.

_____ a. Lengthen the "Rationale."

_____ b. Provide more details in the objectives.

_____ c. Provide examples.

_____ d. Shorten the component.

_____ e. Lengthen the component.

f. Other - list: _____

_____

_____

THANK YOU!

APPENDIX II

Dear Student:

I am attempting to redesign this course so that students will have the opportunity to have input into what will be taught in English 101. Described below are some ideas I am considering. The ideas are grouped in eight sets of two each. Will you please read each pair of ideas carefully and then indicate which of the two you would prefer to have incorporated in the design of this course.

1. I would prefer a course in which:
   a. ___ the student will work primarily on his own using individualized materials. He will occasionally work with small groups and/or with the course instructor on a one-to-one basis.

   OR

   b. ___ the student will work primarily in a group of 25-30 persons, listening and responding to the instructor's lectures with class discussion as a supplement.

2. I would prefer a course in which:
   a. ___ the pace of the course will be adjusted to the group. The instructor will make weekly assignments to the class as a whole. Students will be expected to complete these assignments on time.

   OR

   b. ___ the student will proceed at his own pace as determined by his ability to master specific tasks. This pace will vary from student to student.

3. I would prefer a course in which:
   a. ___ a major portion of the required course work will be done on campus using individualized materials. The time required to complete the material will vary. Outside work, primarily in the form of reading, may be expected.

   OR

   b. ___ the student will meet with the class for three hours per week. Additional work, primarily in the form of reading, may be expected outside of class.

4. I would prefer a course in which:
   a. ___ three tests, a final examination and course papers will be utilized to assess the student's progress in the course.

   OR

   b. ___ an exam will be given at the end of each unit. A student may take the exam when he feels sufficiently prepared. When a student passes a unit exam at a pre-determined acceptable level, he will proceed to the next unit. A final examination will be required. Papers written for the units will be part of the final grade.

5. I would prefer a course in which:
   a. ___ grades will be based upon the student achieving specified course objectives. Grades A and B will be assigned when the student demonstrates mastery of the knowledge and skills required by the stated course objectives.

   OR

   b. ___ grades will be assigned as based on the student's performance as compared to the performance of his classmates. Grades of A, B, C, D, or F will be utilized.

6. I would prefer a course in which:
   a. ___ the student will be responsible for his own learning and progress and for meeting the stated course objectives.

   OR

   b. ___ the student will have to meet certain requirements set by the instructor to maintain satisfactory progress in the course.

7. I would prefer a course in which:
   a. ___ the instructor will be the primary source of information for the students by lecturing and answering questions in a class situation.

   OR

   b. ___ the instructor will serve as a resource to the students, assisting them when they run into difficulty and suggesting materials and approaches to aid them in meeting course objectives.

8. I would prefer a course which:
   a. ___ would end in sixteen weeks.

   OR

   b. ___ would be completed when a student finished the stated course objectives within the sixteen weeks.

* * * * * * * * *

Age - circle one: 18-21 22-25 26-30 31-40 over 40

Sex - circle one: male female

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